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# HAVE YOU UNDERSTOOD CHRISTIANITY

W. J. CAREY



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# HAVE YOU UNDERSTOOD CHRISTIANITY?

BY  
W. J. CAREY, M.A., R.N.

PUSEY HOUSE, OXFORD  
AND CHAPLAIN H.M.S. "WARSPITE"

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DEDICATED  
GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY  
(BUT WITHOUT PERMISSION)  
TO  
OUR CAPTAIN,  
E. M. PHILLPOTTS, R.N.,  
H.M.S. "WARSPITE."

*March, 1916.*



## INTRODUCTORY

I HOPE I shall be forgiven the title of this book, which represents well enough the ideas which led me to try and write it. All my grown-up life I have mixed with and lived among men, and often we discuss philosophical and religious subjects, but I find that they seldom have any coherent idea of what Christianity is and what a Christian man is in for. They mix up the important and unimportant so much. They boggle over the early narratives of Genesis ; or the Old Testament ideas of warfare ; again, frequently they believe that religion means living a narrow life and using pious jargon and breaking out of the broad stream of a full, rich, eventful life into a backwater of repressed and starved vitality, where to be religious means to cease to be a man, full-blooded, adventurous, risk-taking. It implies a self-centred carefulness about your own soul, wherein you are preoccupied with "keeping your own feet warm." You dare not be generous to the sinner, you turn an icy look on the man or girl who has made a false move, but you hob-nob with the selfish, the cold-hearted, the mean-spirited, if only they are con-

ventionally respectable and church-going. Now I differ from them here. I think Christianity is not only a right and happy relationship with God, but also a coherent and satisfying scheme of life. It has a fascinating past and an inspiring future. I want them, therefore, to know what Christianity means, and what a real Christian really is or should be.

I believe also that Christianity is not a thin-blooded preoccupation with oneself or an individualistic union with the Divine (as some one-sided mystics seem to think), but a glorious adventure for the honour of God and the rescue and salvation of a world, and an enterprise demanding the highest and noblest qualities in the adventurer.

So I sit down to write this book with the intention of describing, if I can, what Christianity really is, and what a real Christian is like. I want to state why we believe, and how it is that our belief grows yearly stronger.

And then I want to show not only that Christianity is a high and noble thing, but that a man or woman is as bound to follow it as they are bound to follow Truth or Honour or Patriotism. I do not say they are bound to find, but they are bound to seek, else they are open to be called ugly names.

And naturally I want them to be Christians. Just as I want all Englishmen to be patriots and all politicians honest, and all women to be honourable, so I want all human beings to be Christians. It is

right that they should be : it is the will of God, and also best and happiest for themselves.

How can you get all this into a title ? I thought of " A Christian's Defensive and Offensive," but that is rather cumbrous, and would strike the casual purchaser at the bookstall as a dry religious treatise. " A Christian's Apologia " would appeal to some, but a sergeant of Marines or a petty officer wouldn't know what *apologia* meant, and I want to reach some of them too. Besides, it isn't in any sense an apology. So I decided for the most simple and direct title possible, " Have you understood Christianity?" and I mean to work that out into (1) the reasons why some of us are Christians, (2) what Christianity is, (3) why *you*, whoever you are, ought to be a Christian, or at least should be pondering the problems of which we believe Christianity is the solution. So if any reader thinks the title too tract-like, I ask him to consider my difficulties and forgive.

And there is one more thing worth saying. If, and when, the war ends we shall have our sailors and soldiers coming back in floods to build up a new England. Is that England of the future to be Christian, pagan, or just muddled ? Our soldiers will probably bring back new ideas from Flanders ; they will be familiar with Belgian and French priests and churches ; they will have admired their courage and devotion. They will have seen their own chaplains teaching and administering religion

in very different surroundings to the somewhat stiff and conventional environment of the average English church. How are we to meet these returned men? With the old long dreary services, with elaborate anthems in which they can't join, with litanies which only a ripe saint can follow? Or can we rise to the occasion and give them the essence and core of Christianity, and make them feel that in all our Christian life and activity we are just seeking to bring them to the secret of the love of God and of one another? But if so, we must be sure that we understand ourselves what is the real gospel of Christ and the method and means of salvation.

The book is addressed to the average man, but occasionally I find I address myself also to my brethren, the clergy, because I know that, in spite of all criticism directed against us, the vast majority of us are only too anxious and eager to find out the best ways of leading our people to the feet of our Master and Friend.

W. J. C.

H.M.S. *Warspite*.

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# HAVE YOU UNDERSTOOD CHRISTIANITY?

## CHAPTER I

### WHY SOME OF US DARE TO CALL OURSELVES CHRISTIANS

**C**HRISTIANITY is kept alive because some men and women have had real religious experience. The hangers-on of religion, the more or less half-and-half Christians, the pagans who retain some strains of Christianity are really people who get warmth from a fire, they are not on fire themselves. But the true sources of any real religious vitality are people who have felt and experienced the Divine touch. They are the fire.

Now millions don't know this. They think religion means believing something told them on authority, whether by the Pope, or by the Church, or by Pastor Jones of the Kilburn Tabernacle. Now I am not denying that for many people this reliance on others is a starting-place or a prop of religion,

but I maintain that if this was all, religion would not survive long.

Unshaken and unshakeable Christians—and any really religious people—believe, and cannot be put out of countenance, because they have felt and experienced the Divine. Some have experienced conversion—the sudden invasion and inrush of a personal supernatural influence into their hearts. It is no merit of theirs : it simply happens.

Others find in prayer or meditation a sense of peace, of help, of strength which assures them they are on the right lines and are in touch with a higher power than themselves.

Others live by a Divine standard. They try, by God's help, to be honest and pure and kind. They find their reward. They do not get the Old Testament rewards of abundance of camels and sheep and menservants, on the contrary, sooner or later, they suffer with Christ—for the world is redeemed by the sacrifice of the best, not the worst—but they have as their reward a clear conscience, a spiritual cupboard empty of skeletons, an inward peace and security, and a felt right-relationship to the high and holy Powers of Heaven.

These are the religious people who underwrite religion. These are the breakwater against which secular and atheistic writers break helplessly and will always break. For their religion does not depend on the date of Genesis, or morality of Jael or

criticisms "higher" or "lower," or even on the undoubted importance of facts like the almost universal instinct for religion. It depends on an experience which nothing can touch. How can I illustrate? A short time ago I saw a battle cruiser silhouetted against a snow mountain. The sky was a grey-green, the sea grey, the battleship black, the background white. It was beautiful. If I hadn't been so cold I could have looked at it for ever. I don't care if every other man in the world says it was ugly, I only pity them for not seeing. They lack the vision.

So I have heard orators on Clapham Common denouncing religion, exposing it, vilifying it; the only influence it has on me is to produce a mixture of feelings that it is probably not *true* religion they are denouncing; and that if they only once "saw" the real thing they would talk differently or not at all; and that I wish God would reveal to them the real thing. Then I go off and enjoy my tea. Sometimes I get up at those meetings and put the other side; and then they answer and think they have shaken me to the core. They haven't. And there are thousands of us who are like that. We may, it is true, be false to our religion, we may betray it, we may discredit it. But we never doubt it. If I were being conveyed to hell by devils, I should still say as I went below, "Christianity is true, though I've betrayed it."

You may ask me why we are so sure. Well, it is hateful to talk about one's inmost convictions, and I have no doubt that even St. Paul and Cardinal Newman loathed the exposure of their own souls when they spoke or wrote their Apologias. But if I am challenged I will answer. When I was eighteen years old, and a prayerless, unpleasant schoolboy, it came into my mind that it would be a good thing to run straight. I went to my room and knelt down to ask God to help me, for although I did not pray in those days, I had a good mother who had taught me to pray. As I knelt, there flooded into my heart and soul such a light and joy and peace that, in my ignorance, I thought I was going to die of sheer happiness and glory. That irresistible, sudden, unexpected flood of light lasted for nine months, and continues intermittently till to-day. I do not lean on it now or bother if it departs, because there is at my disposal an undercurrent of never-ceasing companionship with God which never goes unless I sin. If I sin it goes out like the extinguishing of a lamp, and leaves me in utter and intolerable gloom.

I hate saying all this ; but I want to make it plain that although we are not the only religious people, nor indeed the best religious people (for this sort of experience is often sent to the worst people who otherwise would be inevitably lost), yet, considering that there are thousands of us who have had this overwhelming experience, religion will never die



or be overthrown. Unbelieving movements and fashions will come and go ; fresh loose-lipped orators will decry religion, but religion, like a solid rock amid the storm, will rear her head strong and mighty and impregnable when all those threatening waves have long spent themselves in froth on the distant shores. We shall use arguments, but we do not depend on argument. We use words as I shall use them when I go home to describe the cruiser against the lonely hills of snow. But if my description means nothing to the hearers, if my æsthetic phrases are untechnical and untrue, the beauty remains and the vision remains. I shall use fresh arguments and discard the old descriptions, and though I might be called dishonest for doing so (" last time you said the sky was grey-green, this time you said it was pinkish "), yet I shall be honest all the time, for the thing was there, the vision was clear, it is only my descriptions which may be at fault.

This, then, is the reason why we are, at bottom, so sure. You may call it Mysticism, and I daresay it is, but in that case it is true mysticism.

As far as I can make out it is the mysticism of the Hebrew Prophets who were God's great agents for the propagation of God's own final religion. I have not often seen it worked out in books, but Dr. Hamilton's great book, *The People of God*, convinced me that our experiences have a respectable ancestry. Those

Prophets did not get their convictions from reason or by some discovery following diligent intellectual search. Their certainty was given them. It was a revelation. They knew intuitively that God was in their hearts. The event was too overwhelming, too sudden, too cataclysmic to have been imagined. They felt God. So have we, to our own eternal gain or loss. You can too, if you seek and pray ; not necessarily in such overwhelming experience as has been given to some, but in the quieter and more cumulative way in which all can share.

## CHAPTER II

### WHY WE TALK ABOUT RELIGION

YOU will probably say at this point, "Why argue?" "It will come to some, and they will inevitably believe; not to others, and then you cannot blame them. Talking won't make any difference."

Well, we talk about these things for several reasons. Firstly, because we feel that if it is true for us, it must be true for all. If God wants me, He wants you. We therefore preach it as God's truth. We must say it, even if nobody listened, that God exists, and that He reveals Himself to some, and therefore must wish to reveal Himself to all. We cannot endure the idea that God has favourites; if He privileges some of us, it is for service, not for selfish and isolated enjoyment. And, secondly, we want everybody to believe it, and therefore we talk and write about it. Why did Ruskin write about pictures? Why do artists write and talk about art? Is it not because, having themselves entered into a vision, they are so enamoured of its essential truth and beauty, that they naturally and

instinctively want others to share it ? So we. We are not like Greek and Roman Society which built up its enjoyments and luxuries on the basis of a slave population who paid, by their servitude, for the exclusiveness of the few. We don't believe in Helots and Slaves. We don't want closed doors behind which we enjoy ourselves while the multitude outside sweat in the heat or shiver in the cold. There's enough for all ; room for everybody ; happiness for the general. Why should we keep to ourselves the secret of the fact of God, the love of God, the peace of God which passeth all understanding ? Don't we know that although many seem able to live without God, yet many are restless and unsatisfied, never really able to rest, always seeking something to keep them amused ; ever chasing pleasure because they have not got happiness. Are they not rather like caged beasts pacing restlessly behind the bars of their prison because they have not got that inward peace which alone satisfies ? Do we not know that sooner or later all will need God, and that even now they are poorer without Him ? I believe that in God, and only in Him, will anyone find those priceless treasures of Truth, Beauty, Holiness, and Love, whose Source is God, and whose vestiges and traces in this world are simply rays and gleams of Him.

I want everybody to know truth, to speak truth, to be truth and to do truth, and I know that in its

fullness this is only possible by union with God, who is Truth.

I want everybody to see beauty in all forms, the created beauty of this world and the uncreated beauty elsewhere, and I know that union with God is the key to this, for He is Beauty, and beautiful things are things touched with His life.

I want everybody to be holy ; that is, to have the spirit of a courtier of God ; to carry with them the traces of having been in His presence ; to appreciate the awfulness and austerity and beauty of goodness, and I know that this comes only from a constant standing in the presence of God.

I want everybody to know love ; love of God and of Jesus, of the angels and saints, of a woman (if it be so), of children, of dear friends, of humanity ; and I know that love in its uttermost is only possible to those who begin at the top, or get to the top, in the love of God.

And holding all this, do you wonder we preach and write ? Are artists and poets to write and we to be silent ? “Woe is me if I preach not the gospel.” From our love of God we have learnt to love His children, and our love expresses itself in trying to lead them to God for His and their happiness and for their welfare and joy. You may criticize sermons and deprecate preaching ; but when you push aside the dross, you will find that any real preacher and any true man of God is trying to do



only this—to persuade and entreat you to enter the right relationship with God and there abide for His joy and for your soul's sake.

Our denunciation of evil is not mere puritanism, or because we are kill-joys, but comes from our intense conviction that evil prevents you from seeing, makes impossible the vision, crowds out God.

We do not preach a mere negative gospel, "Don't do this ; refrain from that " ; on the contrary, we teach a positive gospel, " Do learn to love God ; do perform noble deeds of heroism, self-sacrifice, nobility ; do find peace and from peace gain power." Sometimes we step aside to denounce the obstacles that impede the course. But in all talk and writings we really have but one object : to persuade people that there is such a thing as religion ; that it is no fake but a real experience of peace and power and joy ; and that, when there's such a good thing about, they ought to be in it. And one day we hope that you'll listen and think. For you must not imagine that those who have experienced this inward conviction of the power and presence of God are all parsons ! On the contrary, it is experienced by the most different types. I am always coming across it, but the last three who come into my mind are an Oxford undergraduate who died of wounds at La Bassée, a seaman-gunner, and a naval officer, both the latter not only of approved

courage, but of exceptional recklessness and daring. Their conviction of God's presence did not alter them except so far as it enabled them quite easily (so far) to abstain from evil and hate it, and gave them a wistful and most attractive love for what is high and noble ; but it left them as vivacious and amusing as ever, if possible, even more so than before.

For our idea of religion is not to emasculate a man, to rob him of his *élan* and spirit and turn him into a smug, or even into a teetotaller or non-smoker. He must judge of such things for himself. We simply desire to connect him up with God, so that the best sides of him—his supernatural side of devotion and holiness, and his natural side of courage and honour and vitality—may be reinforced and invigorated, while his worser side of coarseness and selfishness may automatically wither and die.

We do not want to make him odd and furtive, withdrawing himself from the natural fun of life or attempting a hermit's life in isolation from the social side of the ship or regiment or neighbourhood.

He will be just an ordinary man, punctual, no doubt, in his religious duties, and averse from every form of evil, but otherwise only distinguished from the rest because he has in his soul the deep and perpetual music of the sweet companionship of God. He will not be smug or self-conscious or supercilious, but just an ordinary man, extraordinary in his

freedom from evil and his capacities for cheerfulness and endurance, but otherwise normal and sane.

People are apt to divide men into pleasant pagans and nasty little self-conscious religious people. It is a too narrow division. There exist both ; but there is a third class, known to most people, although too small in numbers, which consists of men who have all the natural virtues of pleasant pagans, but have in addition the aroma and atmosphere of a real Christianity. I suppose the late Alfred Lyttelton was one of them, and certainly Lord Roberts, and possibly that master of men, John Nicholson.

That is the class we want to increase ; persuading men that they need not be either merely "ripping pagans" nor "mousy little men" (as Bishop King called them), but Christians of the real type, sane and strong, powerful and devout.

That is the reason we talk and write, instead of simply hugging to ourselves our great discovery of God's revelation.

## CHAPTER III

### WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN ?

#### I.—*The Simple Christian*

ALMOST too much space has been given to preliminaries, but one must clear the ground and show good reasons why some of us are so sure, and also why we try to enlighten our neighbours, instead of being contented with our own great good luck. We are sure because we have experienced ; we talk because our treasure is not ours to keep to ourselves, but a trust to be handed on by us to God's other children.

But when we try to talk to people we are brought up short against two great divisions of mankind, the educated and uneducated.

At first perhaps we ignore the difference, and try to teach too much. We expect from sailors and soldiers and labourers a more or less comprehensive grasp of, *e.g.*, Bible history, of the environments of the gospel story, and of the relation and contrast between heathen religion and morals, and the tenets and ideals of the Jewish and Christian

religions respectively. We expect them to know something of well-known personages, Abraham, Moses, the prophets, the apostles, and something, perhaps, of the general facts of the Reformation.

If we had children to deal with, and could put them through a long and comprehensive course, no doubt we could do something. But with your casual audience you cannot take these things for granted. When you are seriously told, as I was this morning, that the author of the *Iliad* was M. Venezelos, and that the Father of the Jewish race was not Abraham, but Pontius Pilate, you have to reconsider how much you can get into their minds as the theoretical accompaniment of a real religion. They must know something; they must have heard of God and Christ and the Holy Spirit; and they must have some general idea of sin, of redemption, of grace. But I doubt if it is any good teaching them the knowledge—on which I have laboured so often—of the reasons why we believe in God at all, and why we believe that Jesus Christ was God. Most of them simply can't understand. They believe and must believe on authority. The Church teaches this, their mother taught them that. If a man can understand reasons we must give them, but with a large number of people we must take the fundamentals for granted, and leave out many of the frills.

It is just the same with the difference between Church of England and Roman Catholic. If a



sailor or soldier crosses over, it is always, in my experience, for some inadequate reason ; they are going to marry a Roman Catholic girl or something similar.

I do not know what to do in these cases. A short time ago in one ship I had two men who wanted to "change their religion." One had married a Roman wife and wanted to be a Roman ; the other had done the same years ago, but now the wife was dead he wanted to come back. Neither of them knew anything about it whatever. How could they estimate the values of the Reformation and so on ? I didn't know what to do ; I almost suggested that they should pair and both remain as they were. I asked the Roman priest if he would like to talk to his intending deserter, but he sent back to say that the man was free to follow his conscience. I felt I could browbeat the men either way, and whatever they decided, the whole thing would be valueless, and could not be otherwise.

So I have come to the conclusion that with uneducated people you must have a simple gospel, which I present thus :

A Christian is a baptized person who

- (1) Believes in God.
- (2) Believes in Christ as the Son of God, who came to earth to save us from sin ; to unite us to Himself ; to be our guide to heaven.

- (3) Believes in the Holy Spirit as the Power behind the Church and the giver of Life and grace to enable us to live up to Christ's standard for us.

As a result of this belief the Christian lives in a certain way.

- (1) The Christian prays, and goes to church to worship in company with his fellow-Churchmen.
- (2) The Christian leads a Christian life of love towards God and man, of cleanness, and unselfish usefulness to others.
- (3) The Christian receives Holy Communion—in the right and converted state of soul—believing it to be the Christ-appointed means of union between God and himself and between himself and his fellow-communicants.

That is all. You can expand it, of course. You can work in Confirmation, penance, conversion, and all the specific doctrines of the Church. But, roughly speaking, this skeleton outline represents the core ; it is a minimum, no doubt, but unless you build on this, and see it is really understood, you will only precipitate religious indigestion. As things are at present, the mass of people will *never* understand Church history ; very little Church doctrine ;

nor have they the vaguest idea of the difference between Roman Catholics, Church of England, and Wesleyans. Breathe it not to a Roman controversialist, but the Roman sailor has not the least understanding of the difference between us and them. Bless their hearts, there is no bitterness in them. One soldier said to me once, "I would just as soon go to you to confession as to my own priest." I said, "Go away, I'm an abandoned heretic." And I drove him off to his own priest.

If we are to touch all this mass of people, we must teach a simple gospel—of the love of God, of personal touch with Him initiated and sustained by prayer and Sacrament.

We can teach as much more as we can, but at present it strikes me that we try to teach so much that nothing sticks. We can teach the full circle of teaching to the educated ; but to the uneducated we must give about six definite things.

Therefore when I ask you in my title, "Have you understood Christianity?" I would deal with you as a simple man in the street. I do not ask you to make a fool of yourself by controverting educated and serious theologians on their own subject. I ask you something you *can* understand. Look back to the preceding page or two and ask yourself: Am I a baptized person, who really believes in God and in the Saviour, and in the Helping Spirit? Do I pray and worship? Do I live a wholesome and useful

life ? Am I loyal and loving to my Saviour ? Do I make my Communion with a clear conscience ? Answer honestly : Yes, or No.

If you say " Yes," you are a Christian ; if you say " No " to them all, you certainly are not.

## CHAPTER IV

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN ?—*continued*

### II.—*The Educated Christian*

THOUGH it is impossible to draw an exact line between the uneducated and the educated Christian, yet in all probability once you have achieved the position possible to the first, you will want to advance to the second. Some will never do it, but others will. You will want to advance, because you will certainly desire to help others by word as well as example, for though the uneducated Christian may help others by example and testimony, he never will by argument.

The humblest peasant may be the greatest encouragement to others, but he will never be a St. Paul. If, therefore, you have the ability and leisure to help others in their mental difficulties, and if, moreover, you desire to be a complete Christian who can understand and appreciate the niceties and proportions and comeliness of the Catholic faith and life, you must think, learn, ponder, read. I, for one, do not want a stupid and receptive laity, told what to think by ecclesiastical teachers who guarantee

that if they are obedient enough, they—the teachers—will see them through to heaven all right.

A submissive and obedient attitude is right enough for children and childlike people; but for mental grown-ups it is cowardly and wrong. Truth doesn't need ecclesiastical binoculars, it stands four square for all the world to see. If it needs half-lights and special-pleadings the scrap-heap is the proper place for it. Men and women who are grown-up and mentally robust can and should enquire, search, and criticise, provided only they are sufficiently modest to remember that no one mind can see all truth, and that the Church of God with its great record of saints and doctors is probably more likely to be right than you who began to be interested in theology last Christmas year.

And if you want to know where to start, I submit the following scheme of thought:

- (1) God. How the world came to believe in Him, and why anybody believes in Him.
- (2) Christ. Why we think He is the Son of God made Man.
- (3) The Bible. Its authenticity, its authority, its history, its evolutionary teaching, its enormous bearing on (1) and (2).
- (4) The Church. Its history; development; the strain of truth running through it; the strains of evil and untruth, because human



as well as divine. Its divisions and their cause.

- (5) Big Subjects. The Incarnation, the Atonement. The doctrine of the Spirit. Eschatology. Religious psychology. The doctrine of the Sacraments. The doctrine of grace. Mysticism.

I think this list will give you enough to go on with, and once you start you will find the subject branching out into all directions and introducing you to all sorts of fascinating byways and unexpected books and authors.

This sort of education will not make you a Christian ; you can get to that in the simpler way sketched in the last chapter ; but it will make you—if you still believe—a more helpful and more complete Christian. You may say honestly that you have neither the time nor the talent for such investigations. Right ; then be content with being a simple Christian. But do not be content with the lesser if you can fairly achieve the greater. After all, you have a mind, and there are more interesting things in heaven and earth than *Tit-bits* or even *John Bull*.

And if you are really capable of intelligent reading, do not be afraid of becoming a sceptic ; it is better for a really educated person to be an honest sceptical seeker, than a coward who dare not look at his

religious convictions, lest their seemingly substantial body should prove after all only a ghost. You see how almost truculent I was at the beginning of this book about the certainty of some of us. I owe that largely to someone who asked me fifteen years ago, "Do you really believe all this?" And I went away and thought, "Do I?" And I found that intuitively I was certain, because of my boyhood's great experience, but I found that I gradually justified it to others by the method of the great Bishop Butler. Intellectually my belief in God is a probability; it is more certain than not; but conviction comes with experience. Therefore I do not try to *prove* God's existence to anybody before they start. I only try to make it probable enough for them to start to find out for themselves; it is for them to prove it. I am sure by my experiences that, if they try, they will gradually find the same certainty that I have found myself. After all, one never does start anything with previous certainty. Marriage, one's profession, adventure, are all alike experiments. You can only prove them by trying them. So with religion. I have found complete security and tranquillity through my hard-won formula of 'probability plus experience,' and I commend the same to everybody else who is in difficulties. But I won it by facing it; otherwise I should have gone through life preaching deductions rather than first principles; when I was challenged as to my first

principles by some intelligent person, I should have—intellectually—run away and hid.

So it is with all these great doctrines. Do not be afraid of them if you have an intelligent mind. I know that some of us are unable to criticise sufficiently to unmask the subtleties of heretics ; if so, study the writings of great and honest believers. You will be a better man for that. Try books like Hamilton's *The People of God*, in order to get an idea of the growth of the Christian religion and the Christian Church, from its early beginnings within Jewish life and Jewish consciousness. Try modern books about Christ by authors like Moberly, Mackintosh, Temple, Selwyn, Nolloth. Read up "big subjects" in moderns like Westcott, Scott Holland, Church, Gore, Darwell Stone, Illingworth, Paget. For mysticism try Dean Inge, Miss Underhill (a bit risky, I think), Bishop Chandler.

See for yourself if they do not broaden your mind and your outlook, and even if you leave the jousting with heretics to more trained theologians, yet a course of reading in the masterpieces of acknowledged leaders of the faith will help you to be not only a Christian, but a more or less complete Christian.

NOTE.—I have not fully worked out here my own reasons for believing in God and Christ, because I have already done so in two books, mainly in *The Life in Grace* (Longmans, 2s. 6d. net), pages 9 and 43, but also in *My Priesthood* (Longmans, 3s. 6d. net).

## CHAPTER V

### ABOUT CONVERSION

I HAVE probably given the false impression that before you can be a real Christian you must have experienced that rush of feeling and conviction which I described in Chapter II. I am sorry if I have left you with that impression. These spiritual earthquakes are given to some by God either because they are too bad or weak to be saved without them, or because God has some special work for them to do. To the best of our knowledge, though St. Paul experienced this sort of conversion, St. John did not. It is not normal, and most people are called to be God's friends in a more ordinary, prosaic sort of way.

So if you want to be a Christian, you need not wait. You can begin to-day. And the start is made by *Thinking*. Consider: Is there a God? Is it more probable that my own intuitions and convictions, the instinctive belief of mankind, the religious experiences of Jews, Christians, saints, are true than that they are false? More probably true. Very well, then you must act on the probability and for the present believe that there is a God.

But what sort of God is He ? Is He a far-away celestial king ? Is He morally good, bad, indifferent, or what ? Your conscience and the Jewish prophets, and the testimony of those who are recognised as the best and truest men tell you that He is good. Right again. You will find that He is more than good, He is your Father, your Friend Who made you and loves you, Who has created you for an eternity of happiness in heaven, but tests you for it, and prepares you for it, by a life of probation and apprenticeship on earth.

But if this is true, do you acknowledge it, or live as if it were true, or take any notice of Him ? “No,” you say, “I don’t. I live to please myself, in a way that I have chosen for myself.” But aren’t you wrong to do so ? If you marry and have a child of your own, how will you feel if he ignores you, never speaks to you, cares nothing for what you want, and lives in a way which has no reference to you at all. Would you not be sorry and feel badly treated ? “Yes, I should.” Well, but that is exactly how you are treating God, if there is a God.

“Well, it may be all right what you say, but it’s uncommonly difficult. You tell me I ought to live a straight life, to refer my conduct to God, to learn to know Him and love Him. How am I going to do it ?” But have you ever honestly tried ? Have you asked for help ? Have you in spirit approached your Father and told Him your perplexity and difficulties ? Have you ever really prayed ? “No,

I have not." But why have you not done so ? " Because I have never really thought deeply about it." Well, will you think deeply about it, because, after all, it matters. Things of the soul, questions of God, of responsibility to Him, of life after death, are matters well worthy of any man's best attention. Will you not be honest with yourself and ask whither you are tending, and how you are living, and what will be the end of it all ? Whether you are not unconsciously neglecting God and wounding His Fatherly heart, and unwittingly betraying His cause which needs your championship, in the midst of a world which rebels against Him and despises Him ?

" But if I do think and make up my mind to serve Him, what shall I do, and how will He help me ? " You get in touch with Him and receive His help in two ways. First, whenever you pray<sup>1</sup> He sends an answer sooner or later—generally sooner—into your heart, and you will feel possessed by a spirit of quiet, of peace, of power, amid which temptations seem to lose their force, and goodness and holiness seem attainable after all. Of course, you may not find this all in a moment, but if you stick to it, it comes.

Then the other way of getting into touch and union with God is through the Sacraments which Christ instituted and left to us as the means of finding union with Himself, and—through Him—

<sup>1</sup> For the connection between thinking, praying and loving see *Prayer and Some of Its Difficulties* (Mowbray, 1s. 6d.).



with the Father. There is Baptism, the first of Sacraments to be received, in which a person is baptized with water in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Baptism is, of course, the ceremony of admission into the Church—the Brotherhood of Christians—but it is much more than a mere ceremony. Christ is not idle when His minister is baptizing in His Name. He gives His blessing then, which is a much deeper thing than most people imagine, for He gives them mystical union with Himself, and so makes them “members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven.” And so doing He gives them not only the right to be called Christians, but *power* to be real, living, holy Christians, if they for their part will do their best to co-operate with Him.

Then, as you know, there is a further Sacrament which completes Baptism, and is called Confirmation.<sup>1</sup> Here the Bishop lays his hands on your head, as you kneel in real and humble acknowledgment of your obligation to be a Christian. But, again, Christ is not idle while his minister does His work, and He Himself invisibly present gives His Holy Spirit to those who come to be confirmed, that they may be able to be strong and soldier-like Christians. Confirmation is therefore the Sacrament of strength.

Again, Christ offers you the great and sacred Sacrament of Holy Communion, in which you can

<sup>1</sup> Acts viii. 14.

receive vital union with Himself by partaking of consecrated Bread and Wine, through which Means He imparts to you His own Life. Now this religious meal of consecrated Bread and Wine has several aspects and meanings. It binds you, for instance, in a real bond of fellowship with your fellow-communicants. You are all brothers hoping the same hopes, and partaking of the same Sacrament. But the union is not only with them, but with Christ, for the Bread and the Wine are the mystical Body and Blood of Christ, which we receive in remembrance that, as the Bread is broken, so was Christ's Body broken for us on the Cross ; and that, as the Wine is poured out, so was Christ's Blood poured out for us at Calvary. And the Church has always taught, and Christians have always believed, that this consecrated Bread and Wine are not holy merely by remembrance but are actually and spiritually the Body and Blood of Christ. "This is My Body," said Christ. "This is My Blood." The Presence is spiritual, of course, but true and real, so that those who receive It in penitence and faith are joined to Christ and so to God. And by so receiving Him we gain the strength and new vigour which comes from union with Him.

You may interrupt here and say you are not good enough to come and receive Him, yet Christ has taught us that He is perfectly willing to receive us if we come humbly and penitently. He has even appointed special means of forgiveness for those who

feel themselves held back by a guilty conscience. That you will find by a study of St. John xx. 22. But I will not deal with this subject now,<sup>1</sup> because it is not necessary to my present purpose, which is to explain the positive, sacramental means of grace by which Christ gives us power to be holy and Christian, by uniting us to Himself in Baptism and Holy Communion. I would only insist, in passing, that past sin and unworthiness need be no final barrier to turning over a new leaf, and using the Sacraments. So if you are really convinced that you ought to try to love and serve God, do not say it is impossible. On the contrary, it is quite possible. You can manage it perfectly well if you make up your mind to it and lean hard upon prayer and your Communion. But people *do* fail, and then go about saying that it cannot be done; that Christianity is impossible. What they really mean is either that they have not really tried or that they have ignored or neglected prayer and kept away from Holy Communion. I simply do not believe that a man or woman ever fails who tries, who prays, who communicates; but if they neglect either of these conditions I am no more surprised than if a man told me that he failed to lift a gun off the quay on to the ship. I should say, "Did you use the crane?" "No, I tried to get it done by hand." "Well," I should say, "of course you failed. I could have told you so before-

<sup>1</sup> See page 93.

hand. You would not have failed if you had used the best means at your disposal." So when a man says to me that it is no good, that he will never succeed, all that I feel sure of is that he is not going the right way to work, and not using God's own means of success—Prayer and Communion.

So you see I want to make it perfectly clear that a person does not need a special convulsive sort of spiritual earthquake to make him a Christian. God is no doubt spiritually drawing him and calling him all the time ; that is certainly true. But if a man is willing, is open to conviction, then the road is quite clear. He can start off at once to find God and realise religion. He must think ; and if his thinking leads him right, he will pray.

Prayer and ordinary effort will enable him to live a clean and moral and Christian life, and by the act of Holy Communion he will rise to the higher levels of religion through personal union with the Incarnate life of the Risen Christ.

Of course I am assuming that the person is already baptized ; if he is not, the question of baptism would come in after the thinking and praying and effort to follow conscience, for all these stages are possible to the unbaptized. But when he is convinced of the supernatural and revealed character of the Christian religion, and desires not some vague philosophical or mystical union with God, but the Christian sort of union with God which results from incorporation

into Christ, then he would be baptized into Christ and enter into the supernatural order of things in which Holy Communion is the crowning gift and privilege.

Thus nobody need wait for a spiritual upheaval, that may or may not come ; anyhow it is not a matter within your competence to produce or withhold ; it is God's action wholly. But you can begin the pilgrimage to God at once, immediately, by thinking and praying, by the effort after a conscience-governed life, and by the use of the Sacramental means of union with Christ, until you come to love God and your Saviour with all your heart and strength. Then you will be truly converted.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE EVOLUTION OF CHRISTIANITY

**I** THINK it would help you a great deal to understand religion if you understood the evolution of religion : how religion grew from its elementary primitive faulty forms to its flower and fruit in the religion of Christ. All life works by evolution, and religion does just the same ; it had its early and imperfect forms, and gradually rose to its perfection in the life and teaching and grace of Jesus Christ.

I will not attempt to deal with the obscure and uncertain manifestations of religion such as ancestor worship, totemism, and so on. I will try roughly to sketch the three great stages of religious development as we know them in history.

#### (1) The religion of the heathen.

If you want to put the religion of the heathen into a phrase, you might say that they believed in many gods, and that these gods were not holy.

The best known heathen deities are of course the immoral gods of the Bible narrative, Baal, Moloch, Milcom, Ashtaroath ; the somewhat milder deities of the Romans, Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Venus, etc.;



and the more artistic divinities of the Greeks, Zeus and Hera, Apollo and Athene, and so on. But though the conceptions of their gods differed according to the temperament of the nationalities concerned, being much more carnal and cruel among the Easterns than, *e.g.*, among the Greeks, yet the common characteristics are there, viz. Polytheism—the belief in many gods, and indifference or hostility to morality and holiness. There was no doubt some truth in these religions, truth which in the Egyptian and Oriental religions and the Greek mysteries reached high levels, but as a whole they were vitiated throughout by these twin faults of polytheism and indifference to the morality of the worshippers. You offered a calf or a goat, and all was well ; the god was appeased. That the worshipper must have a broken and contrite heart, that he must be inwardly purged as it were with hyssop, and washed white as snow, was unknown to heathenism in general, and in the bulk.

(2) The religion of the Jews.

Two nations came to know better, the Greeks and the Jews ; the Greeks by discovery, the Jews by revelation.<sup>1</sup> The best Greek thinkers, pre-eminently the profound and attractive Athenian philosopher, Socrates, came to believe that nature being a unity and conscience what it is, there must be (or most

<sup>1</sup> For this subject see *Discovery and Revelation*, by H. F. Hamilton, published by Longmans (2s. 6d. net).

probably was) a single ruler of the universe, and He good.

This conclusion was not the result of intuition or instinct or immediate perception, but came as a sort of discovery after long thinking and pondering. "It looks as if it must be so," would be a fair way of describing the mind of Socrates on these great matters.

But the conviction of the unity and holiness of God reached the Jews in quite a different way. It was forced upon their souls, as it were, from outside, just as St. Paul's conversion was branded in upon him almost in spite of himself. The subjects of this intuitive conviction were the Prophets. No doubt individual great minds had felt it too; doubtless Moses, Joshua, Samuel, had felt that Jehovah was something more than the holy tribal God of Israel, but burning conviction on a large scale with sufficient dynamic power to convert all Israel comes in and with the Prophets. That is the extraordinary and overwhelming importance of the Prophetical books: of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, and the rest. Their burning and inspired message came not primarily from thinking or pondering, or from any of the cool processes of the brain, but from a conviction which they felt was a revelation of God to them from the outside. They were aware of a presence and a force and a message, simply not theirs, but disclosed to them that they

might shout it to the world. I do not suppose that the conviction of the Prophets differed very much from the "conversion" experiences of Francis of Assisi, or Newman, or Wesley, or from the inward conviction and immediate certainty of thousands of humbler souls in all walks of life. Personally I give the same assent to all of them; they are true experiences and experiences of truth. To me they are the guarantee of the whole gamut of religion. I know, of course, and assent to all that Dr. Scott Holland and other eminent and most gifted teachers lay down about the vital importance of the historicity of Christianity, *i.e.*, the truth of the story of Christ and His life and acts, and so on. I agree, but I am, I think, frail enough in my brain and powers of criticism to be devoutly thankful that there are also immediate tests of the truths of supernatural religion in general; *viz.*, those experiences and immediate apprehensions of Truth, of a Power, of a Presence, which appear in the history of those thousands of most precious conversions.

Such, then, was—to the best of my belief—the origin of the conviction of the Prophets; it was a mystical experience profoundly felt and profoundly true.<sup>1</sup> And such was their conviction that Israel was converted by them, and after the return from the captivity we find that the religion of the whole nation without exception was the religion of One

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Isaiah vi. and Amos vii. 14, 15.

God of Heaven and earth, Who is a Holy and Righteous God.

(3) The Christian religion.

What, then, was the further need ? Why did this true Jewish religion need Christ and His religion ? What in it did He come to undo or do, that He might set the crown on the evolution of religion ? I suppose one might say that Christ came to do at least three great things.

- (a) To expand the Jewish conception of God.
- (b) To teach a higher morality in view of that fresh revelation of God's Nature.
- (c) To give men not only true knowledge about God (which the Jews already had largely), but *power to become sons of God by union with Himself.*

I will deal with the first two clauses briefly, but at length with the third, because it is shockingly neglected, largely unknown, and yet is the very centre and core and heart of the Christian religion. In fact, it is the description of Christianity itself, for Christianity is only superficially a Creed, it is a *Life*, a life of union with Christ, and, in Him, with the Father.

Let me then take clauses (a) and (b).

(a) The conceptions of God current among the Jews were true, but narrow. They knew Him as Lord and Master Whom they must obey. They did not know

Him (at least not generally) as their Father, as Loving, as Love. "God is Love" is a Christian statement, made possible by the teaching of Jesus. Clause (b) refers, of course, to the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. In this great series of sermons our Lord teaches that if we think of God as a God of love, we must revise our ideas as to our rights and duties towards our neighbours, *i.e.*, God's other children. Henceforth we are not to think of our obligations to our neighbour as simply legal or statutory, but as family relationships based on the mutual love of the common children of One Heavenly Father.

That is the explanation of the teaching of the Sermon ; it inculcates a *family* morality ; it points to the time when Christians shall all recognise themselves as one family, and shall behave accordingly. The precepts of the Sermon fall naturally into their place when so regarded. We do not bite and claw and grasp when it's our own family we are dealing with. "Turning the other cheek" becomes natural enough if a brother of ours is foolish enough to try and quarrel with us at breakfast-time. We don't immediately up and seize the poker. Instead of that we only say, "Steady on, old chap ; don't be an ass. You'll feel better after breakfast. You're a bit livery, that's what it is." That is turning the other cheek—a natural process in an affectionate family, and what our Lord exhorts us to do is to

remember that all the world is one big family, whose members are all children of the one Father, and that we should therefore treat each other affectionately, humorously, tenderly—not always talking of our legal rights and our statutory obligations, and so on. Once we realize the family idea of the world which Christ teaches, the Sermon on the Mount will be a truism, because our ethics and morality and mutual relationships will not be based on contracts or treaties but on the simple healthy Christian basis of mutual tenderness and love.

Now important as these two clauses are, they are amazingly unimportant compared to clause (c). For the two first are expansions—important, of course, but only expansions—of what the Jew knew already.

But “Power to become sons of God” is *new*. Hence its essential Christianity. New power won through new life in Christ—that is the Gospel.

For the Jew already knew that God was One and that God was Holy. Jesus did not alter any of that knowledge, though He expanded the idea of the Nature of God. But the Jew was ignorant of *how* to be internally holy, *how* to be a son of God.

His knowledge of God’s holiness only increased the sense of his own sinfulness and inadequacy and inability to correspond. “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death” (Rom. vii. 24, R.V.), “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

These were the expressions of men who knew all about the unity of God and His holiness, but did not know *how* to be holy ; how to be washed from sin, how to receive power to become sons and holy children of God.

Now it was just this power that Jesus came to offer. You do not derive it from yourself, you get it from union *with Him*. He will join us to Himself, and from that union we shall get cleansing, help, and power to be good—to be the sons of God.

So Christianity is not a Creed or a theory, but *a life*—a life of union with Christ from which we derive power—power to be sons of God and inheritors of eternal life.

. . . . .

You will say, “ How is that life of union with Christ attained and maintained ? ” Easily enough in theory. There are three strands in this unity.

- (1) You must have faith in Christ ; that He is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, and will fulfil His promises to you if you do your best.
- (2) You must pray to Him, and to the Father in His Name, so as to keep in loving touch with Him.
- (3) You must use His Sacraments, in order to let His Life into you, for Sacraments are the



means of imparting the Life of the Incarnate Christ to your soul and body. In Sacraments Christ comes to dwell in us that He may transform us into His likeness. Therefore it is altogether vital to use them faithfully.

This, then, is the core of Christianity, a life lived in union with Christ, Who gives us power to find God and be His Sons. The best analogies to this "life of union" would be a very strong human friendship, or married life with the physical side different, or, indeed, the life of union between a mother and her babe. As the infant draws its life and food and vigour from its mother, so the soul that is Christian draws its strength and vigour from its dependence on the life of Christ. If you can spiritualise the material side of the union between mother and child, you will get a good analogy, or, indeed, an exact parallel, to the relationship between Christ and the soul. The "Vine and the branches" is our Lord's own description. He is the root, His the sap ; we, the perishing clippings from the wild vine, would utterly perish and would always be valueless unless and until we are grafted into the life of the True Vine.

. . . . .

Thus it is, then, that we believe that religion has evolved, under God, from the lower to the highest form.

The heathen religions contained truth, in so far as they acknowledged the existence of heavenly powers, but they were all abroad as regards the number of gods and the nature of God.

The Jews—who are the school of religion for the world—became aware by inward pressure, or revelation, that God was One and God was Holy. There they stopped. How to get power to be holy themselves, how to be sons of God—this they knew not. They could only hope for a Messiah who would teach them.

Christianity completes the Jewish revelation ; it reveals Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life ; by union with Him, by partaking of His Life, by being grafted into Him, you get power to be a son of God. And this is Christianity.

But in order to make this quite and absolutely clear I mean to give the essence of Christianity a chapter to itself, so that it can stand out in the boldest relief.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY OF CHRISTIANITY

(1) Christianity is a Life of loving union with Christ. It is not a theory, nor is it merely a creed.

(2) The result of a life of union with Christ is union with God the Blessed Trinity.

Christ is the Bridge between God and man. We get into union with Christ at the Manhood end of the Bridge, viz. by incorporation into His incarnate risen glorified Manhood.

Once united to Christ, we pass out at the Godward end of the Bridge into the Life of the Blessed Trinity.

(3) This union with Christ is attained by

(a) Faith in Christ as God the Son made Man ; and by trust in His reliability and power.

(b) Prayer, which is ourselves seeking and finding Christ.

(c) Sacraments, which are Christ seeking and finding us. Sacraments let the Life of Christ

into us ; and when in us He does His blessed work in transforming us into His likeness.

(d) Effort, by which we co-operate with Christ.

(4) This is Christianity, and if we co-operate with our Lord, we shall receive power to live a holy, happy, useful Christian life here, and in the world to come we shall inherit Life everlasting.

## CHAPTER VIII

### WHERE THE CHURCH COMES IN

SO far I have presented Christianity, except perhaps incidentally, as an individualistic religion, *i.e.*, a relationship and union between a soul and Christ. But this is, of course, not an adequate account of the matter, for Christianity is emphatically a social and corporate religion, it takes the individual and makes him aware that he is part of a larger body, for in becoming a "Member of Christ" he shares a common Life with all the other members of Christ. Even in his prayers he is not allowed to forget this. "Our Father," not "My Father," is the opening phrase of the model Christian prayer. So, too, in the Holy Communion Service the partaking of the same Bread and the same Wine symbolises and effects not only union with Christ, but with those who share the same Bread and the same Cup. We should not be wrong if we said that Christian salvation=salvation by Jesus in His Church.

For it is luminously evident that our Lord not only converted men, but formed them into a society or

brotherhood which came to be called the Church. "Upon this rock I will build my Church"; "The Lord added daily to the Church those that were being saved," etc. There has been a controversy as to whether the Church is visible or invisible, but it is a foolish debate, for it is just about as sensible as discussing whether John Smith is visible or invisible. Obviously there is an essential John Smith we cannot see, *i.e.*, the soul and personality of John Smith; but equally truly John Smith is visible, for every Smith and every other human being expresses, and will express, his essential self through an essential body, as long as the conditions of this world obtain.<sup>1</sup> So it is with the Church; there is doubtless a spiritual order of holy souls known completely only to God, but in this rough-and-ready world these souls are expressed in bodies which can be seen and counted, and therefore are capable of incorporation into a visible society. And as a matter of fact we find that the Church in the Gospels is always treated as a body or society, or as a part of the same—"the Church, which is in thy house." You qualified for admission into the Society by repentance and faith in Christ, and you were formally sealed into the Society by baptism, which is rightly regarded, not only as the occasion on which Christ gives His blessings to His newly received son, but as the ceremony of formal

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Claims and Promise of the Church*, Gillett and Palmer. Murray. 2s. 6d.

admission into the Christian Society, the Church. The individual does not cease to be an individual, but his individuality is heightened and made more effective and useful by incorporation into the larger society. It is just the same in the State. Pieter, the Hottentot, who lives entirely by himself in the Kalahari desert, is not more a man than if he lived with his tribe, or if he was a member of a State. The State, by numbering him among its members, would introduce him to a larger and more complete life than he can possibly enjoy in his desert environment. There his whole time is spent in hunting, cooking, and sleeping, with the occasional diversion of putting a poisoned arrow into some other nomad who has strayed too near his ancestral halls. But in a State he would have leisure for other and nobler pursuits, because co-operation saves time and gives opportunities for something more than the struggle for the bare necessities of life. So it is that Churchmanship offers a larger life than individualism. By admission to the Church you find yourself inside a brotherhood. The other members are there to advise, help, and encourage you ; the officers are there to teach you the Church's customs and traditional faith, and to administer to you the Sacraments which bind the members to Christ and to one another. You for your part strengthen the Society, for you provide in yourself another recruit to reinforce the Society in its spiritual warfare



against evil, and in its campaign to produce a happy, holy, healthy, and spiritual world. You help to build the kingdom of Christ in the world, in fact. You cannot do it without them, for you are too weak, and they cannot do it without you and those like you.

Thus Christianity has always expressed itself in a Society, a body. Its members have enlisted at baptism, where they received from Christ the adoption of sons, and from the Church formal admission into membership. The new members find the Church an organised affair. There are the officers, who at first were the Apostles only, but who expanded out into Apostles, elders, and deacons, and finally in sub-apostolic times became the Bishops, priests, and deacons of Church history. There is official teaching and tradition handed on from generation to generation, *viz.*, the Creeds and the traditional laws and customs of the Church. There are the immemorial Sacraments: Baptism, which enrolls a man; Confirmation, which strengthens him by the gift of the Spirit; Absolution, to cleanse him from sin; Holy Communion, to give him abiding spiritual union both with Christ and with his fellow-members in Christ. By heartily identifying himself with the Church, and co-operating with it he gains great spiritual profit and power and is enabled, whether as official minister or as a lay member, to do a good deal towards the great common task of

converting and regenerating the world. He never forgets his spiritual citizenship. He is proud to be an Englishman, and rejoices in England's great traditions and noble history. So he is proud to belong to the Christian Church ; he honours its heroes and saints, is pleased and proud to take part in its services and worship, and is jealous for its discipline and good name. He rejoices when the Church is sound and effective, and grieves when it—or any part of it—is sinful, slothful, or ineffective.

And remembering that the Church is not only a material society founded by Jesus, but is spiritually the Bride of Christ, the Body of His elect, he never over-emphasises his individuality, but finds that his own personal religion is best expressed and most adequately realised when he feels and expresses himself as a member of the great corporate society of Christ, the Christian Church. That the Church, for a thousand years united, is now a collection of bits, rather than a single organism will be to him a grief and a wrong which he must help to put right, but he will not lose sight of the true underlying unity which baptism and faith in Christ makes real, nor will he forget that the essential necessity of corporateness is not nullified by the temporary separation of the members of the one Christian Family.

And the practical corollary of a belief in the Church is to share and perform the privileges and

duties of Churchmanship. Therefore, if you are, let us say, a returning soldier from Flanders, attach yourself to some neighbouring Church—your parish Church, if possible—and join in the life of it. Look upon it as yours, and yourself as belonging to it, and through it to the Church of England in particular and the Catholic Church in general. You will soon find to your satisfaction that Churchmanship is not only a theory, but a reality.

## CHAPTER IX

### WHY A PERSON OUGHT TO BE A CHRISTIAN

THERE is one, and only one, reason why anybody should be a Christian, and that is because Christianity is true. Some writers are foolish enough to damn religion with faint praise as being a sort of harmless drug to keep men from the frantic despair which would seize upon some men in certain moods if they saw life as the atheist says he sees it : ruthless, aimless, inexplicable, hopeless. Others look upon it as a good preventive of revolution, it being suggested that otherwise the poor, the "have-nots," if cheated of their hopes of a happiness hereafter, would certainly make sure of some sort of happiness here by laying violent hands on the goods of the rich, the "haves." Personally, if I thought religion was only this, I should be a violent partisan of the red revolutionaries, for if this world *is* the only place, why, in the name of all that is ridiculous, should any silly scruple or easily blown-upon theories of religion or morality stand in the way of the raw desires to get, to possess, to enjoy ? Violence and

cunning would be the only creed of the penurious exiles of society, and who would blame? As Tyrrell said to those who hailed with joy a silly statement that the Roman Church was dying, "If Rome is dying, it is time for you all to order your coffins." So be sure that if religion is dead, it is time for such morality as makes modern society possible to order its coffin too. But those of us who are Christians do not base our obligations to be religious on so silly and cowardly and precarious a basis. We believe Christianity because we think it is true, and we are quite willing to give our reasons.

Now—in order to be quite honest—let me lay down two propositions. First, that the *certainly* of religion can only be won by a man or woman's own experience, just as no pudding can really be tested except by the eating. Therefore, ultimately no one can teach us religion or prove it to us. The utmost they can do is to give us sufficient reasons for trying it seriously. Religious teachers are like the men at the motor garage who assure you that the car is all right, and that if you keep to the right and go straight on, you will reach your destination; but the proof lies with you. As you find the car running smoothly and you pass all the proper villages marked in the map, you get surer and surer, but this cumulating proof is yours, not theirs. They did their best and got you off, and could do no more. If you had asked them to prove you were already there before

you started, you would still be in the yard asking questions—a horrid nuisance to everybody, and *certain* never to arrive. The others were convinced that it was good enough ; started off, and by now are sure that they are in the right road.

And the second proposition is that some of us do not start on a level with others. Some are more than ordinarily sceptical, you must make allowance for this, while others who have experienced conversion in some form are unusually sure. I say this because personally I do not depend very largely on reasonable considerations, I use them for others, and I fall back on them if my lamp of religious faith burns low ; but ordinarily they remain in the rack. And when I set them out here for public use I feel I must be honest enough to say that though I believe them to be true, I do not question the genuineness of those who have religion and yet have never had occasion to use them.

The first of these reasonable grounds of religion is the extraordinarily widely spread existence of the religious instinct.

Why have men believed ? There must be something in it. Why should people deceive themselves for nothing ? People often deceive themselves, but it is always for something. A man is a hypocrite, we say ; but hypocrisy is negatively very valuable, it is the unconscious tribute paid to virtue by a man

who believes in it sufficiently to pretend he has it, though he has it not.

Every effort has been made by anti-religious people to explain it away. They have shown that the beginnings of religious worship centred in trees and stones and ancestor worship, but that is no puzzle to us; it is not surprising that these un-instructed aborigines went wrong in the objects of their worship, what impresses us is the fact that they had the religious instinct at all. I remember the sort of triumph with which some people asserted that at least one sort of people—the pygmies—had no religion, yet even then I remember reading a few years later how some adventurous traveller peeping round a tree discovered in some clearing deep in the forest, a band of pygmies engaging in some religious rite and sacrificing bananas, or something similar, to the unknown God. It always keeps cropping up, that religious instinct. You sit upon its safety valve—a healthy religion like Christianity—and it escapes in various subterranean forms like theosophy or spiritualism, or some absurd form of necromancy.

Now of course it is open to anybody to distrust all forms of instinct and intuition—to say that God, Truth, love, patriotism, even existence are merely imaginary projections of an unreal and only imagined-real human mind. But I take up the challenge boldly. Life does demand faith, I grant it. We must either trust or mistrust our instincts.



Your love for your wife may be an unreal sensation existing between two unrealities. Your sense of right and wrong may be purely imaginary. But you must face life. Is it all real or all unreal? If you say, All unreal, then we part company; only I must say that the facts of life must be to you too silly and inexplicable for words. The unsubstantial consciousness called yourself has only to steal an unreal shilling, and you will be arrested by an emanation from your (or somebody's) consciousness called a policeman. You will be haled before an unreal magistrate who will blame you (quite absurdly, of course, since neither he nor you nor the shilling are real), and send you to a prison which exists only in your (and perhaps his) imagination, though it is excessively a matter of faith to see how his idea of prison and yours happens to seem like the same thing.

If you like this nonsense you are welcome to it; but you get to it sooner or later if you deny the reality of your own sensations, intuitions, instincts. I prefer to remain in the company of those sane people who boldly accept the instincts, sensations, intuitions of life as reliable and true.

With them, therefore, I proceed. If instincts always have some basis of truth, then what of the religious instinct? The prevalence and extent of it make certain, to my thinking, that *there's something in it*.

Now when you've got that, you've got a solid start. You will at least be serious, and then you can consider the evidence with which I dealt in the chapter before last.

You will see how the religious consciousness was trained upwards and rejected unworthy objects until in the consciousness of the world's religious genius—the Jew—it rested on the belief that God was one and that God was holy.

Given a conviction that there is truth in the religious instinct you will find, I think, that considering all other cumulative evidence (the coincidence of religious morality with the dictates of the conscience ; the testimony of Jewish writers as to the truth of a real inward religious life ; the experiences of conversion found among the Jewish prophets ; etc.), the religious instinct is best satisfied with the best Jewish faith—the faith in One God Who rules the universe, Who is likewise good, holy, and righteous.

After that you will have to consider the Person and claims of Christ. Was the Jewish religion complete ? or did it need a top storey ? St. Paul, for instance, felt that it needed something further. So did all those who looked for a Messiah. For though the Jewish religion was true as far as it went, it was powerless to save from sin, and therefore powerless to unite the believer with a Holy God.

St. Paul thought that Jesus in Himself supplied

the crowning-point of the Jewish religion. His death was the ground and base of the forgiveness of men's sins, His resurrection and life in Heaven was the source of power by which men were uplifted into heavenly places with God.

St. Paul's theology is not easy. It demands that you understand the Person and Natures of Christ.

He was God : strong enough to achieve salvation for the world ; He was Man : the second Adam and the new Head of the race with Whom we could (through His Incarnation and the Sacraments and our faith) get into real and living union just as really and actually as we are in union with the first Adam (*i.e.*, unredeemed humanity), by the fact of physical generation and descent. It is a most satisfying theology, but not easy. Yet if you are an educated man in search of religion you must consider it : it is part of the price of the pilgrimage.

And that will bring you to the other evidence about Christ. There are His claims to be the infallible, sinless judge of the world, Who was before Abraham, and is the Son of God. That has to be taken in conjunction with His noble, elevated, supreme character. Does He give you the impression of a fraud, or a lunatic ?

Then you must consider His resurrection ? How comes it that the Church was ever founded if He never rose from the dead ? Can you really think that the Apostles founded a Society and based all

their teaching on a resurrection which had never happened? And that they suffered stripes, imprisonment and death for either a fraud or an unsubstantiated imagination?

Then you must again consider the testimony of Christians. They tell you, from the Apostles downwards, that they are conscious of an inward power and peace which sometimes have flamed into the triumph of an experienced conversion, and are, to their mind, a proof positive that they have believed the truth and no lie.

What will you say to all this? A fraud? Well, it's on a biggish scale, isn't it? But if you again say, "There must be something in it," then you must act, if you would find certainty. Your religious garage-men have done all they can. You must turn out into the road and try it for yourself. You must pray to God that, if He is, He will give you light and power; you must live up to the best your conscience tells you. And if God so wills it, you will experience the same peace and conviction which Christians do experience, which do not necessarily make the New Jerusalem altogether clear and patent to the eyes of your flesh, yet enable you to live in faith and hope, and die in peace and confidence.

## CHAPTER X

### THE ATTITUDE OF A PERSON WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE

I SAID in the last chapter that there are some minds unusually sceptical. That is true, and they are often the best minds. They have been trained to accept nothing except what is either mathematically demonstrated or is the result of so many inductions as to be for all practical purposes a general truth.

What are they to do? Are they to be asked to skip weak places, and skate over thin ice, in order to be able to reach the great conclusion, "God is"? Personally I think not. The God I worship is, to me, a God of tenderness and honour and truth. He will not ask of a man more than a man can give. He will not ask a man to be in a hurry nor to be dishonest. But He will ask him to seek. I think that God will not blame some people for not being Finders, but He will blame them for not being Seekers.

Such a man must consider the claims and evidence of natural religion: he will remember the needs and

pleas of the human heart : he will examine seriously the testimony of religious people : he will want to find God if there truly is a God.

He will, I think, be very careful to live up to the "categorical imperative" of his own conscience and be cautious not to stifle the demands of his moral nature by over-intellectualism. He will remember that the heart of man and the needs of man are as much a part of humanity as the intellect. His manner of thinking and his life will be the concrete expression of the prayer, "O God, if Thou truly art, send me the light I need."

After that I do not think he need worry. He is a seeker, and, if religious people are right, the God they worship, the universal and loving Father, will some day—either here or hereafter—send the needed light to the son or daughter who, not having found, yet has honestly been seeking all light and all truth.

## CHAPTER XI

### RELIGIOUS TEACHING

I DO not call this chapter "How to teach religion," because religion cannot be taught. You can no more teach a man the secret of the love of God than you can teach him how to fall in love. Something has got to happen before a man gets religion ; there has to be some pressure or action by God, and some change or removal of scales from the eyes on the part of the person himself. There has at least to be an act of will, though in true religion this is not the whole matter, for "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God " implies the heart ultimately as well as the will. But what we can do is to create the atmosphere and environment in which the seed of God can take root and grow. We who value religion can erect as it were the trellis-work, so that the vine when it emerges from the ground can be orderly and fruitful.

I suppose that if we are to be honest we must explain our religious teaching thus : we are sure ourselves, both from reason and, above all, from experience, that religion is true, and therefore vital for everybody. We therefore teach it to children,



just as we teach patriotism ; but we have to realise that sooner or later the time will come when they must be left alone to choose, and we must find our chief weapon and comfort in the power of intercessory prayer. Upon their choice depends their religion. Religion is a covenant between the soul and God ; until they make that covenant they will not have a living religion, although they may be well-instructed in religious history or dogma. In a word, we are back to the old truth that religion is union with Christ, and that requires living faith on our part and grace given on His.

Are we therefore to teach nothing and simply wait with folded hands to see whether a child or a man will get religion, as it were, in the void ? Surely not. We teach patriotism, self-control, unselfishness, and so on, although we know that nobody is ever really patriotic or self-controlled or unselfish until they have made an act of self-identification with the teaching that until then is external. So we shall teach the reasons for religion ; the history of religion ; the doctrines and claims of religion, in the hope that one day—probably after a struggle—they will take the great step and make their “ external ” religion internal and their very own.

How, then, shall we set about teaching religious truth ? Obviously you need different methods for children and for grown-up people.

With children and childlike people you *must* teach

on authority. Equally with young and old, educated and uneducated, the moment must come when they transcend all religious teaching and get religion by an act (however obscure or gradual) of the will—preceded, let us hope, or accompanied by devotion of the heart. But, in order to pave the way for this you must use different methods at different ages. At first you teach them truth and not reasons for truth. You teach God as a fact: Jesus as God: the Holy Spirit as Life-giver to the Church and the individual soul: the Holy Church as the Society of baptized believers, and spiritually the Body of Christ. In other words, you teach the Creed as true.

Then you teach the Bible as the Word of God, and encourage them to read it patiently, regularly, devotionally, that they may learn God's lessons of morality and religion. Further, you teach them by the eye. You take them to church and accustom them to the idea and usages of worship and devotion.

And, more important still, you guide and instruct them how to pray, and how to value and use the Sacraments. Now it is quite obvious that religious education would need many volumes to itself, but there are four points in my mind which need a great deal more attention than they get.

(1) *Prayer.*

My experience is that people do not pray. It is a question I often ask my people wherever I work. "Are you Roman Catholic, Church of England,

Wesleyan, or what ? ” “ Church of England. ” “ Do you say your prayers ? ” A great many do, but an enormous number of people don't, far more than most of us dream. I am sure that beginners should be taught some simple invariable formula, such as the Our Father, the Gloria, and perhaps the General Confession. *Then*, after the set prayer they should be encouraged to “ speak out of their own heart. ”

The set form should be one that they can say all their lives : the “ heart ” prayer they should be encouraged to vary with advancing years and experience : the “ heart ” prayers of a child of ten are not those of a man of forty, nor should be.

But both sorts are essential. The formula will give them something to say when tired or when feeling incapable of prayer : the latter will prevent their prayers being simply formal, and, if regarded as changeable, will be saved from becoming stereotyped into something childish and unworthy. I am sure parents and teachers should take an immense trouble over prayers. They keep a soul in touch with God, and save multitudes from sin. Moreover, it is while at prayer that a soul grows and experiences those movements towards God which are conversion or of the conversion type.

But, again, I should like to underline the need of a set formula of prayer as part of a man's praying equipment. I find that in cases of accident, when a man is quite unable to follow any extempore prayer,

one can help him by repeating the old formulæ, the Our Father, the General Confession. The set form is a great stand-by in time of need.

And I think we should do well to teach a few ejaculatory prayers, "Jesus, forgive me," "Jesus, save me," "Jesus, help me," for use in emergency.

If our ship ever strikes a mine and is sinking, there may be no time for the Our Father; but I should like to think that on the lips of each man was the simple ejaculation, "Jesus, save us all."

(2) *Bible reading.*

It is of course possible to hand people the New Testament and advise them to read it devotionally without too much thinking. But you cannot do that with the whole Bible without grave risk. And here we come to a most common fault with Bible teaching: it is not taught on any plan or scheme. It is handed to people as if it was a charm to produce conversion through the reading of some accidental passage, or, again, it is taught as a book to be understood in the lump and of equal moral and religious value.

Yet the Bible becomes the most interesting and illuminating book only if it is read intelligently as the Book of the Revelation or Evolution<sup>1</sup> of the true

<sup>1</sup> Of course I think that Man's religion depends entirely for its existence and development upon God's Revelation to man. When I use the term Evolution throughout this book I mean "Evolution in response to Revelation." But I cannot explain this afresh every time I use the word evolution. Any sane critic will understand.

religion. Forgive me if I expand what I wrote in Chapter VI. In the Bible you get religion in its three historic evolutionary stages :

- (1) The false and imperfect religion of the heathen.
- (2) The real and true but incomplete religion of the Jews.
- (3) The completing, perfect, religion of Jesus Christ.

Just think how fascinating and interesting you can make the Bible on this scheme.

You start with the heathen : they were right just so far as they realised the existence of powers over and beyond themselves, but they went hopelessly adrift as to the object of their worship. *They believed in many gods, and they unholy.*

Then on that dark background you paint the next stage : the rise in the hearts of the best Jews—Abraham, Moses, and, above all, in the Prophets—of the overwhelming conviction that—in direct opposition to the heathen—*God was One and God was Holy.* And you trace carefully the rise of the conception of a Messiah who would come and save His People.

Then you reach the third and final stage of Bible teaching. You show that the Jewish religion, though right, was incomplete because powerless. It could teach you the truth about the holiness of God and

what you ought to be, but it couldn't make *you* holy or unite you to a Holy God. So Jesus Christ came, and, "to as many as received Him, to them gave He power<sup>1</sup> to become the sons of God," in other words, Jesus came that His death might be a valid and sufficient ground for the forgiveness of our sins, and His New Life might be the basis of a life of union for us with God, since this Life of His can be imparted to and assimilated by us. For if it is true that we can have union with Christ, be "in Christ," as new creatures, then we can get a real union with God, for Christ is one with the Father.

All that is left is to understand how we get this union with Christ, and we can teach them that this union is got by belief in Him as God and as faithful ; by prayer that seeks and finds Him ; by Sacraments which let His Life into us, there to do His blessed work of transforming us unto His likeness.

And the New Testament becomes alive at once, for the Gospels are the history of how Christ came to put the top storey on the edifice of the Jewish religion : how He lived and died and rose again : how He offers us power to be sons of God by union with Himself ; while the Acts and the Epistles give the history of the men and women who were united to Christ in His Church, and show how they lived and

<sup>1</sup> The actual Greek word used by St. John (i. 12) is *ἐξουσία* = right. But the right to be a son of God includes the power to be so.

died, and what they believed, and what their leaders wrote to them by way of teaching and exhorting and strengthening.

The whole Bible becomes alive, and in my belief only properly alive, when it is taught on a scheme which shows the gradual ascent of religion upwards, and puts Christ as the crown of all—Himself God and Lord and the source of life and power to those who are “in Him.”

### (3) *Sacraments.*

It must be clear to any honest observer that the English people have practically lost the Sacraments. I am told that this has been the result of the teachings of Zwingli, the Swiss reformer who regarded the Sacraments as bare symbols and mere remembrances of what Christ did long ago, instead of “*efficacia signa*”—symbols which not only symbolise, but actually give grace to the worthy receiver. I am so afraid of exaggerating here, but the facts are clear if anyone will enquire. How many men in a battalion of 1000 men make their Communion weekly, monthly, yearly? How many men on a battleship with 1100 men? How many in a parish of 10,000 souls of whom probably 2000 are grown up and label themselves Church of England?

I have a letter lying by me from a chaplain in France with a cavalry regiment, praising the men most highly, but saying that (excluding officers)



only one man made his Communion at Christmas, though every opportunity was given. I believe that the average number of Communicants in a battleship is above the average on shore, yet I think that if one in ten made their Communion at Christmas or Easter, it would be regarded as wonderfully good. In my old parish at Lavender Hill we were supposed to be very good in having 700 Communicants at Easter, but if you analyse the figures, you would certainly find not more than 200 men out of a possible total of at least 2000 men belonging to the Church of England. Why is it ? Can it be that our Lord's teaching is not plain enough ? "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Or of Communion, "This is My Body . . . this is My Blood ; do this in remembrance of Me." No, it cannot be that. Is it a reaction from Rome carried to the point that we would rather disobey our Lord than value what the Roman Catholics value ? Can it be that we are so utterly stupid and prejudiced as that ?

Or is it that we just don't understand ? We think of the Sacraments as frills on religion ; unnecessary embellishments, so that we call the Holy Communion "the second service," as if this crown and glory of the Christian devotional life were merely an appanage or hanger-on to Morning Prayer.

I think the last is the truth : we don't understand.

Just as those who don't love God will never understand the Eucharistic sacrifice—that perfect offering which lovers of God love to offer Him, so those who do not desire union with God in Christ (which is the very core and essence of the Christian religion) do not understand or value Holy Communion.

The truth about Sacraments is nakedly this : they let the Life of Christ into you. In prayer you find God and He blesses you ; in Sacraments God finds you and you let Him in. “ He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me and I in him.”

I do not think I need say any more. The fault is open, notorious, heart-breaking. We have at our disposal the means for letting the Life of Christ into us. We don't understand them, or don't value them, or ignore them.

This is the secret of the weakness of the Church of England. Strong in historical truth, candid and free in criticism and apologetics, sane in prayer and religious outlook, yet hopelessly weak in Sacramental truth and practice.

There is no remedy I know of except to go on teaching the truth that union with Christ is found and maintained not only by prayer and belief, but by Sacramental means—by the great Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, and by their ancillary Sacramental usages of Absolution and Confirmation, which clean the soul from post-baptismal sin and

strengthen it for the receiving of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Yet there is a practice which I think would help us much in this matter. I have recently found that men keep away from Communion with this sort of excuse, "I don't know the service at all well : I can't find my place in the Prayer Book : I don't exactly know when to go up : in fact, the whole thing frightens me off because I am so unfamiliar with it." How would it be if parents who were Communicants took their children with them, so as to familiarise them with the service ? I know, naturally, that in Catholic-minded Churches this is done as a matter of course, although I expect I differ from some, inasmuch as I prefer children and parents coming together, rather than a Children's Eucharist for children exclusively. I prefer the old habit of families worshipping together if possible. But I am not now dealing with the Eucharist as the highest form of worship. It is so, and I know it, but I am only thinking of the desirability of familiarising children with the service, so that they can find their places, know what to expect, know when to go up and so on.

At the present time, when I celebrate, I have to give out the page every time : "The service begins on page 241," "The Collect, Epistle, and Gospel are on page 68," "Now we skip three pages and go on to the Exhortation and Confession, on page 248." Surely this implies an enormous unfamiliarity with

the service of Holy Communion. If parents would take their children in early age and let them "stand by" and join in the service by prayer and sympathy, I think we should be spared this sad sight of utter ignorance of the matter shown by men who have been confirmed but have never really grasped the lie and hang of the liturgy. And if we made children communicants at a far earlier age than is usual, as we emphatically ought to do, we should solve half the difficulty at once.

(4) *A simple book of instruction.*

One of our most crying needs at the moment is a plain and simple *official* book of instruction in prayer and doctrine. At present we have the Catechism, but no official book of private prayer at all.

The Catechism, though incomplete, is yet absolutely masterly, but it is simply not suited for children at all. Those who sanctioned it must have been real theologians who knew nothing about children. "What is a Sacrament?" "An outward visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." Masterly and exact; yet has any child ever understood this great phraseology? Excellently suited for divines and students and controversialists, but passing strange to the heart and mind of a child. I am told that in the diocese of

Cambrai they have a Catechism written in three parts. The first part consists of questions and answers written in a language that a small child can understand. The second part consists of the same questions and answers amplified to suit people of 14 or 15. The third part deals with the same things in detail and in greater depth, and is suited for grown-up people. Could anything be simpler or better ? I would be willing to wager that out of 1000 men from a regiment or ship not more than 10 know the Catechism, not more than 100 have ever heard of it, and not more than 50 would know where to look for it or what was the name of the book in which it was contained. The average parish priest knows that it is hopeless as it stands, and just doesn't use it. Isn't this a reform that ought to be attempted ? It is one of the puzzles of the universe to me that the authorities of the Church spend endless time and breath over Welsh Disestablishment which, however unfair and unjust, is nothing like a fatal blow to the Church, while the ignorance of the vast majority of the people continues as a deadly disease at the heart of the Church and no real and powerful fuss is made about it. The whole Church of England was convulsed fifteen years ago because some priests wished to use incense as a symbol of prayer and sanctification. How could our authorities have so fiddled while English religion was burning ? The real naked, stark tragedy was and is that our English

lads do not—as a whole—know how to pray as Christians, how to live as Christians, or how to die as Christians. It is magnificent to die singing “Tipperary,” but it is not Christian unless some prayer precedes or follows. Even a gallant death is not a Christian death unless it is the climax of a Christian life or the seal put on the championship of a Christian cause.

All of us pray that the deaths of our men by sea and land are Christian deaths, in so much as our men are mostly baptised and die in the cause of justice, freedom, mercy, which are religious and Christian causes.

But we should be happier by far if our men were men of prayer who had always lived a life of union with Christ and of love for God and their neighbour. I think that on the whole it is easier to die for a cause than live for a cause ; and, moreover, we want our boys not necessarily to die, but to live to remake a future England better, nobler, purer, more Christian than England has ever been before. So we want to teach them Christian teaching in a form they can understand, and the first urgent need is to fix on a Catechism or book that we can unite to teach as the groundwork of religious education.

It may be that we may have to learn from France, and adopt some such Catechism as that of Cambrai. We may have to take the penny Roman Catechism, and change what must be changed ; or we could

work on the basis of that little book—Tomkinson's *My Prayer Book*<sup>1</sup>—which I am always recommending because of its great excellence and sanity, and because of its recommendation by the Archbishop of Canterbury in its preface. For, personally, I am tired of resisting authority unnecessarily; and I want to find a book which our authorities are willing to sanction. The important thing is to teach our children about God, Christ, the Spirit, the Church, conversion, and Sacraments, and the need of a new Christian life; and all these Mr. Tomkinson's book teaches clearly.

. . . . .

All I have written so far in this chapter applies obviously to the young, to beginners, and to more or less uneducated persons. There comes a time when some of them will begin to ask the why and the wherefore of their religion. Then we must trust to truth and reason and learning. We must *never* say, "Don't ask questions," or "Just believe and don't try to go deeper, for you'll only get puzzled." It is sheer faithlessness to deny the ultimate unity between faith and reason. Faith and reason, like two men in the hunting field, may get separated and take different lines and at periods be widely parted, yet, ideally, both must be in at the death. And here we need not be faint-hearted. The Church

<sup>1</sup> Longmans, 3d.

of England, weak as she is in dealing with the uneducated, is strong in dealing with the educated, if they are willing to listen. I can imagine no sane man who despises Christians such as Dr. Creighton or Dr. Driver or Dr. Moberly or Bishop Lightfoot on the score of deficiency of intellect. When dealing with history or evidences or criticism, or with the reasons that make for belief in God and in Christ, the Church of England, far from being apologetic, can be both bold and determined. We do not need to falter or apologise for our faith ; our weakness does not lie here. If anything our fault is that we are too intellectual. Certainly we have nothing to lose by comparison with any other Church in Christendom or by comparison with the best critical and philosophical intellects outside Christianity. No. We possess a strong position really. We could teach powerfully and successfully if we set our house in order, the crying need of the day is for our authorities to lay aside most other things and tackle the burning question, How are we to give effective and uniform teaching to the ignorant, the children, the beginners ?



## CHAPTER XII

### DISPUTED POINTS

**T**HOUGH you understand that the heart of Christianity is living union with Christ, such union being found and maintained by faith, prayer, and Sacrament, yet if you are a new-comer to real religion, you will probably be surprised and pained to find that there are a number of points on which Christians differ. Some of these are directly due to human error and sin, others owe their existence to the past history of the Church of Christ. For instance, you are sure to come across the Roman question, and the problem of Nonconformity; disputes also about baptism, confession, and ritual. Perhaps it would be well if I gave you the average opinion among many of us on these subjects—asking you to remember that we think as Churchmen: we give an immense weight to the traditional doctrines and customs of the Church, because we think that the Holy Spirit is behind them. The Roman question is this. Roman Catholics say that Christ gave St. Peter authority to act as Vicar of Christ, so that he is the ultimate final infallible authority in the Church when he

formally makes pronouncement on questions of morals or faith. Thus it becomes a deadly sin if you wilfully refuse to bow to his decisions, and to be out of communion with him is to be out of communion with the Church. Now our answer to this is as follows : If this is true, we should find evident and abundant traces of it in the New Testament and in the early Church. Government by Apostles was obvious then, as later government by General Councils, but where are the traces of such a person and position as the Roman doctrine demands ? Let any candid person read the New Testament. Do you find Peter occupying a papal position ? Prince of the Apostles certainly ; leader evidently ; but ultimate, supreme, incontestable, where ? And in the first 300 years of the Church do we find any such evidence ? No doubt you get fairly early claims by the Roman See to the leading position in the Church, but it is more than counter-balanced by the evidence that the early saints and bishops of the Church knew nothing about it and did not give in to such claims at all. There is the Bishop of Asia Minor who, when excommunicated by the Bishop of Rome, rebukes him and says all he has done is to cut himself off from other Christians ; there is St. Hilary of Arles, who lived long under excommunication without any trace of sorrow or fear, and who died unrepentant as far as is known, and yet is a saint even in the Roman Calendar.

Many Romans now abandon the position that Christ gave St. Peter an obvious papal position in the early Church, and maintain instead that the Papacy gradually grew under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Newman's theory of development is the most celebrated writing on these lines. But in the first place it is hard to believe that if a doctrine is really necessary to salvation (as the Romans say of the Papacy, though of course they allow for our "ignorance"), it was not only not held but contradicted in the early ages of the Church ; and, secondly, if you allow for such unexpected developments, why should you not allow for the Reformation also—perhaps as a punishment for the sins of the mediaeval Roman Church ?

It may well be that God permitted the Reformation and allowed a further division of the Church because of the Church's many sins at that time. I do not defend much of the Reformation, but it can easily be shown that the circumstances and sins of the time made some revolution inevitable, although, like all revolutions, our particular Reformation incidentally made a mess of a good many desirable and harmless things.

Personally I should have thought that this latter theory suited the facts eminently well, each part of the Catholic Church being strong in some particulars and weak in others ; the Church of Rome strong in authority and devotion ; the Church of England

strong in history and in her dealings with the educated, but weak in authority and poor in devotion. In these matters one need not be worried or hurried. We ask the Romans for evidence which, so far, they cannot give us ; they ask us to "believe and submit," but one cannot throw away one's reason and historical sense, even for the sake of unity ; and meanwhile we must just go on with the work that lies before us. We are always ready to hear any fresh evidence, and more than willing to go anywhere if the Spirit of God wills it, but most of us are contented to wait, believing that the Church of England has a real mission to the English people, and that God would make it quite clear to us if He willed us to go elsewhere. Meanwhile we deeply respect the noble work that Roman Catholics do, and we admire their strong orthodoxy and deep devotion. But for ourselves we are convinced that as far as we can see we are right to remain where we are for historical reasons, although we hope and pray for a day when a "Papa liberalis" may address us frankly, acknowledge the sins of the mediaeval Church which made a Reformation possible, and discuss how we can wipe out old scores all round, and start again in some sort of working alliance on a proper basis.

Then you will no doubt want to know why the Church of England is parted from Nonconformists.

Well, this is the reason. You will find that all down the history of the Church men have held tightly to four essentials, the Bible, the Creeds, the Ministry, the Sacraments.

Now when the Church of England parted company with the Church of Rome we kept all those essentials, none were lost.

But when the Nonconformists broke away from us they carried none of the highest grade of ministers with them. No Bishop joined them, and therefore episcopal succession and episcopal ordination lapsed. But you will say, "Does it matter?" The matter stands thus. In the earliest days of the Church the Apostles ruled the Church, but when they died off there was a period of about forty years (70 A.D.—110 A.D.) when all admit that the records of the ministry are obscure, although in the New Testament we see that St. Paul laid hands on Timothy<sup>1</sup> when appointing him to his office in Crete. But by about 110 A.D. we find (in the writings of Ignatius and later authors of that period) that the system of Episcopaliamism<sup>2</sup> was established, and the Church ever since was ruled by Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, such offices being conferred by the laying on of Episcopal hands. In other words, a Bishop is only a Bishop if ordained by a previous Bishop who himself traces back his

<sup>1</sup> 2 Timothy i. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Episcopaliamism means "government by Bishops."

own ordination through other Bishops and Apostles to Christ. Now there are a few apparent exceptions. Mention is made of persons acting as priests (or presbyters) without any mention of episcopal ordination—notably at Alexandria. But the volume of such evidence<sup>1</sup> is comparatively small—compared to the opposite evidence, it is “10 to 1 against.” Moreover, it is always probable that even in such cases as appear, genuine episcopal ordination may have taken place, though it is not mentioned.

But granted all possible exceptions. When you find that the Church as a whole has always maintained that a Bishop or priest should be episcopally ordained ; when you find that the available evidence is ten to one on its having actually been so even in the small, disputed period, when you find that even these possible exceptions ceased almost at once, and the episcopal system flourished unquestioned for fourteen or fifteen hundred years, then can you say that it is wise, or right, or safe, or lawful for a body to break with a tradition so ancient and binding, and can you blame the Church of England for not countenancing such a break when she knows that such break is at best irregular and unsafe, and at worst invalid ? No one in his senses denies that Nonconformist ministers are men of God and good

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Darwell Stone. *Episcopacy and Valid Orders*. Longmans. 1s. net. It gives all available evidence.

men, no one denies that Nonconformists are baptized and believers, and therefore within the pale of salvation, but the Church of England theoretically and practically disbelieves that Nonconformist ministers are Catholic priests, and doubts and disbelieves that the Sacraments they administer are the mystical Sacraments of the Catholic Church of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Many Nonconformists would agree ; they deny themselves that they are Catholic priests ; they do not pretend to absolve ; they look upon Communion as mere bread and wine received with a lively faith, and in remembrance of Christ. The Church of England takes them at their own estimate, but claims something different for her own priests and her own Sacramental system.

Time, again, is the only solvent. At present there is no way out of the difficulty, though we all long for Christian union all round. In the meanwhile we can pray with them, work with them on many common grounds, and pray God to give us all the light which will enable us to reunite. But premature acts of union, grounded on no principle except the surrender of all principle, simply do harm. They solve no problem, but only embitter those on both sides who feel that they stand for truths which must ultimately

<sup>1</sup> Except Baptism, of course. The Church has always taught that baptism is so necessary that it is valid by whomsoever administered provided the proper form and matter are used with right intention.

be harmonised by consent, not by the murder or suicide of one or the other. And as a matter of fact the bitterness on both sides is often greatly exaggerated. Thank God, men do learn to differ without quarrelling. We are getting past the stage when we get angry because other people have their principles too. In the Fleet I find that Roman Catholics, Church of England, and Nonconformists work side by side with mutual respect and goodwill, there is not the slightest jealousy or bitterness. There is not the least reason why we should not work side by side with honest goodwill, waiting quietly until God shows us clearly how the truths, which we all hold in a measure, can be harmonised.

. . . . .

These two difficult points I have tried to discuss concern the relation of the Church of England to other Christian bodies from whom it is at present divided. You will be sure to come across domestic differences within the Church of England herself. One such difference is over the question of Confession and Absolution. Now the doctrine involved is this, that Christ gave power to His ministers to absolve penitent sinners from their sin. The Church of England accepts this, as much as the Roman and Eastern parts of the Church. "He hath given power and commandment to His ministers to declare and pronounce to His people



being penitent the absolution and remission of their sins." (Cf. Absolution following General Confession in Morning and Evening Prayer—in the Prayer Book.) But there are further directions in the Prayer Book. In the first Exhortation which follows the Prayer for the Church Militant, in the Communion Service, you find the following: "But if there be any of you who by this means" (that is, of course, by kneeling down alone and asking God's pardon) "cannot quiet his own conscience . . . let him come to some . . . minister of God's Word and open his grief" (say what is the matter), "that by the ministry of God's holy Word he may receive the benefit of Absolution" (forgiveness).

This, of course, refers to the very ancient custom of penitent persons going to a priest and confessing their sins and receiving Absolution.

In the early Church such Confession was mainly—if not entirely—public, and the Absolution was public also, but naturally such confessions gave scandal to the congregation, and were dropped in favour of private confession, in which the priest represented the Church as well as acting as a minister of Christ.

The Roman Church in the Middle Ages made this private confession compulsory, and to this day Roman Catholics are bound to go to Confession once a year, at Easter.

But the Church of England at the Reformation,

while retaining and providing for the practice, made it voluntary, and the deciding factor as to whether to use Confession or not is the person concerned and not any absolute Church authority.<sup>1</sup> The custom of going to private confession lasted long after the Reformation. We know, for instance, that Queen Anne used to go to the Archbishop of Canterbury for that purpose, but people largely ceased to go during the eighteenth century. When the Oxford Movement grew strong in the middle of the nineteenth century men's minds were turned again to the practice, and finding the Prayer Book decidedly in favour in the case of men and women with burdened consciences, people started to go again. Those who had Rome on the brain, and could see nothing good in anything she favoured or practised, made a loud outcry, but nowadays those who oppose themselves root and branch will generally be found to be perfectly ignorant of what the Prayer Book says. Whether you yourself come to your confession or not you have to settle for yourself by the aid of the Holy Spirit. I can only say that I know nothing which so deepens a man's religion and makes it real and genuine and humble and sincere as a confession

<sup>1</sup> By "voluntary" I do not mean that you can take it or leave it as you like. If your conscience is troubled by any "weighty matter" you *should* go. But only you can ultimately decide if you have such weighty matter on your conscience.

made honestly, either because the conscience is burdened with grave sin, or because the man wants to use *all possible means* to express his penitence. It is a matter to consider carefully, with the intention to use it, if you find that your conscience is uneasy or your religion lethargic and dull.

. . . . .

And, finally, there is the matter of ritual. People differ here because their temperaments differ. Some like colour, light, symbolism, while others have no taste for these things. To many, vestments—the special dress in which the priest celebrates Holy Communion—mean much, because of what they symbolise. They are like the ensign in a ship, which symbolises the connection with the King and the rest of the Royal Navy. In itself it is only a piece of silk, but it means a great deal. So vestments—since they are in use all over the Catholic Church—make us think of our union with other Catholic priests and services all over the world. Incense symbolises prayer ascending, lights symbolise the Light which Jesus sheds on this sombre world, colours symbolise the moods of the Church—dark in the days of Lent and white in the joy of Easter, and so on.

I should have thought that if ever there was a case for toleration it was here. There must be some ritual for decency's sake ; untidiness and bareness

must be wrong. Those whose temperament makes them dislike symbolism can easily find a Church without much ritual, and if their own parish church has a bit too much for their liking let them try to understand it and sympathise with those to whom it has its appeal. No one in the Navy can possibly object to ritual. The Service is full of it. In a service when you touch your hat to the quarter-deck, fire a salute over a grave, pipe Admirals over the side, and wear special rig for nearly every occasion, it is altogether too glass-housy to throw stones at Churchmen who see in ritual something helpful and right.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

I HAVE spoken so often of the present difference between the Church of England and other bodies that I feel I ought to add a chapter about her position in Christendom.

Any Christian divisions must be wrong, but sometimes you cannot heal breaches in a hurry, and there are many of us who, although loathing Christendom's divisions, see no clear way out of the difficulty at present.

You must understand that for a thousand years the Church of Christ—the Body or Society of Baptized and believing Christians—was one and undivided.

If you had lived, say, in the year 800 A.D., you could have gone into any Christian country or Church and have found that everybody believed in and formed part of one, undivided, universal Church. The Church was called Catholic because it was universal: the Greek word for universal is "Catholic."

Then about the year 1050 A.D. came the great split.

The Roman (Western) Church and the Greek (Eastern) Church parted company. There were various causes of dispute, and in the disastrous result the Church, instead of remaining one, became divided into two parts. Each part kept what seem to be the essentials of Catholicity, *viz.*, the ancient Creeds, the Bible, the Episcopal ministry, and the Sacraments, but otherwise they became at variance; they parted. Now the Church of England, the "*Ecclesia Anglicana*," was at that time closely in union with Rome. Occasionally there were quarrels with Rome and resistance to some of her claims, but for all practical purposes England formed part of the Western Church under Roman rule and accepted the growing claims of the Pope to be the spiritual Head of the Catholic Church. Then about the year 1520 A.D. came a widespread revolt against the dominance of Rome over the Church. The Renaissance (the revival of learning and thinking) had taken place in Europe, and men began again to think for themselves and, as a result, they disputed the claim of the Pope to be—by Christ's appointment—the supreme Dictator of the Catholic Church.

Men looked into those claims; they did not find them in the New Testament; they did not find them in the earliest centuries of Church Life; they suspected them to be a gradual growth, perhaps legitimate, perhaps illegitimate, but anyhow not

bestowed by Christ or rooted in the essential nature of the Church, and therefore not necessarily to be accepted.

The Reformation, or repudiation of the supreme authority of the Pope, began on the Continent under Luther, but spread to England, and Henry VIII, who was at that time disputing with the Pope about the divorce from Catharine of Aragon (in which dispute Henry was wrong and the Pope—though not necessarily from the highest motives—right), seized the occasion to break with the Papacy and assert the right of the Church in England to a great deal more independence than she had enjoyed before. Now it is no use defending Henry VIII over the matter of the divorce ; it must be granted that the *occasion* of the break with Rome was sordid and unsatisfactory, but it remains true that the real question that has to be solved is this : were the Papal claims to absolute authority over particular Churches right or wrong ?

They were not given by Christ, they were not known to the earliest ages of the Church, they were repudiated by the whole Eastern Church. Yet they had been accepted by the Church of England for many hundreds of years—had she the right to repudiate them when she thought she had found them to be usurping and false ?

According to your answer you will be a Roman Catholic or a Church of England man. If you think

the Romans can prove their point you will be a Roman ; if you think the gradually tightening hold of Rome was just a very natural but unwarranted aggression of a part over the whole—like the gradual grip of Prussia over Germany—then you will remain Church of England, and assert that England had as much right to assert her independence as Saxony or Bavaria has the right to repudiate excessive Prussian claims.

But you must notice very carefully that England in repudiating the Papacy as autocratic, never repudiated her own Catholicity ; nor did she even blame those Churches who preferred to remain under Rome. All she asserted was that she had the right to choose whether she should submit to Roman authority or not, and that as a matter of fact she didn't choose to submit to it. But she asserted that she still belonged to the Catholic fold and was a part—nothing more—of the Catholic Church, and this is proved at once by a reference to the Book of Common Prayer.

In that book—excellent, although incomplete on several sides—you find the claim to be a part of the Catholic Church asserted again and again.

For instance :

“Therefore, in the sundry alterations proposed unto us, we have rejected all such as were either of dangerous consequence (as secretly striking at some established doctrine or laudable practice of the



Church of England, or indeed of the whole Catholic Church of Christ <sup>1</sup>) or else of no consequence at all, but utterly frivolous and vain " (from the Preface in the Book of Common Prayer).

" More especially we pray for the good estate of the Catholic Church " (Prayer for " All Sorts and Conditions of Men ").

The Church of England also retains the Catholic festivals of antiquity, and, as all know, acknowledges in her recitation of the Creeds her part and lot in the Catholic Church.

The truth was that the English reformers who drew up the Prayer Book were not Protestants at all. They were what you might call early-Church Advocates. They were quite sure that many mediaeval customs and accretions were mistaken or confusing, and attempted to get rid of such accumulations by harking back to the doctrines and customs of the early Church.

In so doing they made many mistakes, no doubt ; they shed rites and ceremonies which in themselves were harmless and useful ; but their position is fairly clear. They rejected all Lutheran and other advice to turn the Church of England into a non-Catholic Body ; they revised and sometimes rejected mediaeval ceremonies and customs : but they were passionately anxious to hand on to the English people the doctrines and practices of the

<sup>1</sup> My italics.

Church which Christ taught and the early Church practised.

How far they were successful is another matter. You may say broadly that the Church of England is strong with the educated and weak with the uneducated at present: but if you deny the Papal claims I do not think that you can question the right of the Church of England to try the experiment she has tried.

You may say that you like the Church of Rome better: that her services and discipline appeal to you more strongly: yet that does not absolve you at all from your loyalty to the Church of England as part of the Catholic Church.

I can imagine a man at Oxford who is a member (let us say) of S. Mary's Hall. I can quite imagine that he would prefer to be at Magdalen. I should myself. But if you are a member of S. Mary's it's no use to be always crying outside Magdalen gates because you aren't a member of her. You will get yourself thoroughly and rightly disliked at S. Mary's, and will be a weakness to your own college when you might be a help. I am not sure that the Magdalen men, though perhaps flattered at first at your obvious partiality, would not hint to you that as membership in their foundation is impossible for you, it would be wise for you to make the best of your own institution.

So do I feel about the Church of England. In

many ways I admire and envy the Church of Rome ; she is disciplined and effective and is much the largest part of the Catholic Church. We are a comparatively feeble part in comparison. Yet since I cannot leap the barrier of Papal claims, I have every intention of making the best of the Church of England. God has placed me there, I will try and serve her faithfully ; *Spartam nactus es ; hanc exorna.*

She has preserved the essentials of Catholicity : she retains the Bible, the Creeds, the Ministry, the Sacraments. In her I can pray, I can worship Eucharistically, I can make my confession and receive Absolution, I can receive the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. I recognise that she is only a part of the Church and that a small part : yet I believe a genuine part. I can and will serve her, in the hope that one day when she has recovered from her wounds and has become stronger and more glorious, she will be party to a great reconciliation, when by God's grace, in ways to us still unguessed, she may be recognised by all as part of God's family on earth, the One, Holy, Catholic Church of Christ. I find in my present sphere of work that there is no need for her to be ineffective. The old blessed fruits of Christianity still appear : men become converted : you can see them growing in devotion : they begin to use the Sacraments regularly and religiously : their religion makes them happy and serene. If this can happen somewhere, why can not it happen

everywhere ? and I think it will happen when the sons and daughters of the Church of England, taking courage and believing in the mission of the Church of England, set seriously to their great task of building her up into an effective and convincing part of the Catholic Church of Christ.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE RELIGIOUS FUTURE OF ENGLAND

**W**HAT of the future? Is it dark or bright?

Surely the future of English religion is very like the future of English life. The war is an occasion, an opportunity, a crisis: will it make us or break us? We know something about English life: its splendid sacrifices, its willing self-dedication, its wonderful fighting qualities; but we also know its sorrow and shame, its dark slums, its class bitterness, its sad array of fallen men and fallen women, its selfishness and greed, its poverty of fine and gallant ideals, its passionate devotion to pleasure and amusement, its wide enslavement to drink. Will England die or live as the result of the war? God only knows, but we hope and pray that she may be purged and live.

So with English religion. Shall we fall back into the old muddles and stiffness, the old aloofness and academic conventionality? Or shall we learn to be plain, direct, converting, sacramental, effective? God only knows: but again we hope that England's religion may be purified and made alive.

So far, as the result of the war, one fact is burnt in on me personally, that the elements in English religion which are alive and really efficient are two—the Evangelical and the Catholic.

If you analyse your six or ten devoted backers, who come to services, who bring others, who stand by you through thick and thin, who are obviously and definitely devoted to Christ and His cause, you will find them—at least I do—either Evangelicals or Catholics. The Evangelical will openly say that he is a Christian: he prays, he reads his Bible diligently, he stands up for religion if there is any chaff, he brings others to the knowledge and love of Christ. And though he may lay chief stress upon prayer and Bible-reading, yet very often he is a regular and reverent Communicant. He has little idea of the Church as the Bride of Christ and the great Brotherhood of believers, but he has a very keen notion of bringing souls into personal touch with Jesus. Your true Catholic is also evangelical: he too brings others to Church, but he lays rather more emphasis on the Churchy side of things, he is keen on loyalty to the Body, he values the Sacraments and puts them in the most conspicuous position among his spiritual furniture: he makes his Communion very regularly, and delights to join in Eucharistic worship because he knows that the offering to the Father of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross strikes the highest note of Christian worship.

But of the great moderate section of the Church of England I fear I have no great idea. They seem to have no enthusiasm, no conviction. Occasionally they come to Church or Communion, but you can't lean on them. They are not up to the neck in it, so to speak, they only paddle in the religious current. Taking a bird's-eye view of the last two years certain people stand out at once as my enthusiastic backers.

One was a lieutenant who came to his Communion every day and was a definite Catholic. Another was a server from the Annunciation Church, Brighton—Harry Rolfe by name—who has since died gallantly in Gallipoli—God rest his soul. When I did a six weeks' chaplaincy to the Naval Division at the Crystal Palace he hardly ever came to Church without bringing one or two rough, warm-hearted Northerners, whom he introduced as unconfirmed, but willing. I kept leading these men like dogs on a string to the private residence of the Bishop of Woolwich, who, thank God, welcomed them at any time, and confirmed them then and there. It must be a happy thought to him that in all probability some gallant men now sleeping their last sleep in Gallipoli owe their Confirmation and subsequent Communion to his most pastoral and loving care. Two others I think of who have utterly given themselves to the service of Christ and His Church are Evangelicals who have overlaid their Evangelicalism

with Catholic piety and devotion without losing any of their former keenness. Another has always been "well brought up" and is a thorough-going Churchman.

Now there are, of course, others, but these stand out pre-eminent. They are totally God's; they put God's service as their supreme interest; they have been my support and encouragement and strength.

And so when I think of the future of English religion it is such men that I want to multiply. I want Evangelicals and Catholics, and in time I want the two strains to be found always in the same individual. The two strains need not clash, do not clash. It is really a matter of emphasis, and if only each can be wise enough not to contradict the positive truth which either holds you get a really first-class result. I honestly feel you could not better it. When I look at the Church of England at large I am dissatisfied, but when I look at this type of man I feel simply satisfied. "This is it," I say to myself.

They are good men at their work, they are full of fun and life, they are clean in their lives, they do not criticise others hardly, they love our Lord and do all they can to bring souls to Him.

Therefore to my mind the religious future of England depends on the multiplication of this sort of man. There will be teaching required; we must even begin again at the beginning and teach that



Christianity is union with Christ; we must show people how that union is found and maintained by faith, by prayer, by Sacrament—all these three. We, who trust we are Christ's—whether clergy or laity—must be enthusiastic, we must persuade, influence, lead, mostly by unconscious example, but also by speech when the Holy Spirit makes the way clear.

We must alter Church services until they have three features: clear teaching, evangelical zeal, and Catholic worship and Sacraments. No clergy must be stiff, no laity must be lukewarm, no services must be conventional. I am afraid that I think many choirs should be converted or suppressed, possibly both.

We must have a simpler Catechism, and an easy book of private prayer and devotion to supplement the Public Prayer which the Book of Common Prayer contains. Then when our sailors and soldiers return, they will find a real family affection waiting for them. They will be invited to the unconventional evensong or mission service where the singing will be congregational and the sermon evangelical. They will be led as they can bear it to Eucharistic worship. It can be done, if they are taught very simply, and if the service is very easy to follow.

They will learn that a complete Christianity includes Communion. They will hear the honest truth about Confession and Absolution, in case God is calling them to this form of penitence.

They will find that they must be missionaries to others if they are to serve and love their Lord.

And congregations, too, must alter if our religious future is to be bright. O how I hate the fetish of fine clothes on Sunday ! That conspicuous new dress or hat, or that paralysing frock-coat and those new trousers which mustn't be creased !

And all that looking at other people and noticing what they do and how they dress ! And even that formal punctuality and insistence that everybody should do everything in the same way at the same time—how rigid and stiff it all is ! O for Catholic-looking Churches, and Evangelical zeal, and a warm and affectionate love of souls ! And a real family feeling among Christians, and a quiet welcoming of new-comers, and a willing sharing of seats and books and hassocks !

It can be done. England's Church could be the home of England's worship and devotion if only enough of us are determined that it shall be so. Will you join the rest of us who in secret have sworn to God that they will not rest until England's religion becomes the loving, evangelical, Catholic religion of Jesus Christ ?

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